



STATE SENATOR NAN RICH
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
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GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE
SHOWS HE STILL HASN'T GOTTEN REAL

With the opening of the Legislative Session this week, the Governor delivered his annual State of the State address. As the Senate Democratic Leader, it was my duty to deliver our party's response to this speech. What follows is an excerpt of that speech. If you'd like to read the full text of the speech, please visit www.flsenate.gov/Senators/s34 or go to [\(LINK\)](#) to view video of the speech.

I'm here today to talk about the state of our state. You heard Republican Governor Rick Scott tell us everything is going well, that he's creating jobs, finally adding some money to education, slashing government, and turning Florida around.

Now, look around you. Look at the vacant homes in your neighborhood littered with foreclosure sale signs. Scan the want ads in your local paper and count how many job openings there are and what they're paying. Drive through your community and count the number of closed businesses. Open your property insurance bill – if your policy hasn't been dropped - and your car insurance renewal and brace for sticker shock.

Because if this is turning things around, we're still hopelessly running in circles.

In a state that has so much potential, it's nothing short of tragic that the Republican leadership is still following the same badly written user's manual it's blindly followed for the past 14 years.

Let's take a closer look: If tax cuts for the wealthy and the biggest corporations create jobs, why does Florida have one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation?

And if personal responsibility and hard work matter, why are so many hard working Floridians falling out of the middle class?

Sadly, this is the state of our state in 2012. The ambitions, sacrifice, sweat and labor of millions of fellow citizens have been hijacked by a group of right-wing Republicans who have been in charge for the last 14 years. The priorities of working and middle class families, the “99%” – good jobs with fair wages, decent homes, quality public education, affordable health care, safe and clean neighborhoods – have all been ignored while the special interests have prospered.

What was once a budget surplus under the last Democratic governor was squandered as tax cut after tax cut was doled out to big corporations and the very wealthy. And, as the economy deteriorated and the jobs disappeared, so too did state dollars for education, health care safety nets for the critically ill and elderly, unemployment benefits, infrastructure improvements and the service of thousands of dedicated public servants and teachers. But the tax cuts remained.

Don’t just take my word for it. Ask your local police officers, your firefighters, your teachers – all those on the front lines getting pink slips – and then ask yourselves: What have Tallahassee Republicans done for me lately?

Fourteen years after the attack on the middle class began, what is the solution Governor Scott is now proposing to balance the state budget and put Floridians to work? An almost two billion dollar false choice pitting our hospitals against our schools. The Republican solution to solving the economic crisis in Florida has actually come down to grandparents versus grandchildren.

Enough is enough.

As Democrats, we believe that turning Florida around should mean just that.

It starts with a real future for our children and the dollars to make that happen. Their success is a product not only of parental involvement but also a first rate public education system.

As Democrats, we believe that hard work and personal responsibility should be rewarded, and that everyone should pay their fair share for the public services they use, from police and fire protection to good roads and clean drinking water. Large corporations should share the same sacrifices and the same financial responsibilities as the Floridians who helped drive their success. Their tax loopholes shouldn’t come at the expense of educating our children, caring for our elders, or protecting our communities.

As Democrats, we believe that the true job creators are the small businesses that have been ignored. Our tax incentives should be re-focused so that Florida’s real economic engine gets the shot in the arm it so badly needs.

One year ago, as Governor Scott teamed up with the Republican legislature to repeatedly stop Florida from getting hundreds of millions of dollars – hard earned tax dollars we sent to Washington and now desperately needed for jobs, education and health care - I called on him to “get real.”

It seems he still hasn't gotten the message.

And so today I'm asking you to join me and remind Governor Scott and his fellow Republicans who they actually work for.

As this new session gets underway, the Republican Governor and his friends in the legislature will once again set about putting bad right wing politics above good economic policy. We'll once again face more laws to control women's bodies and other attacks on personal freedoms. Politicians will continue to run against government instead of running it well, public servants will be recast as a public enemy, and deregulating laws that protect us from unscrupulous companies will resurface. And before the year is out, Florida will once again find herself at the center of the battle for the presidency where election laws have been changed to put Democrats at a disadvantage.

So I ask you now to join me once again in urging the Governor and legislative Republicans "get real."

Thank you.



As always, I appreciate the opportunity to serve as your State Senator. If you have any comments or questions on any issue related to Florida government, please feel free to contact my office at (954) 747-7933 or email at rich.nan.web@flsenate.gov.